



TESTIMONY OF JEFFREY C. GENZER
COUNSEL
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ENERGY OFFICIALS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

“GOVERNMENT FUNDED ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA”

May 17, 2007

Chairperson Cheh, distinguished members of the Committee, today I am testifying on behalf of the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO). NASEO represents the energy offices in the states, District of Columbia and the U.S. territories. I have been counsel to NASEO since its inception in 1986, and I am also with the law firm of Duncan, Weinberg, Genzer & Pembroke, P.C., located in Washington, D.C.

I would also be remiss if I did not specifically mention the fine work done by Chuck Clinton, who recently retired after many years as head of the D.C. Energy Office. Chuck did a fantastic job and was an officer of NASEO and a Board member for many years.

I am very pleased to be here today to discuss options for energy efficiency programs. I also want to associate myself with the remarks made by the prior panel. The key point is that the Council and the D.C. government as a whole should strongly support a robust energy office. The energy offices in the states and D.C. are the key implementation arm for energy policy. They also must have a significant responsibility for energy emergency preparedness and response. In my opinion, the director of this office should have the authority to develop and implement a comprehensive energy plan. The D.C. Energy Office has also historically been one of the few energy offices in the United States to operate three of the key federal-state/local partnership programs supported with federal funds: 1) the State Energy Program (SEP); 2) the Weatherization Assistance Program; and 3) the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In my view, that has provided a significant benefit.

1414 Prince Street
Suite 200
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: 703.299.8800
Facsimile: 703.299.6208
Home page: www.naseo.org

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The D.C. Energy Office is eminently capable of operating the public benefits program in the District of Columbia. In my opinion, the model is the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which is the energy office in New York. For a variety of reasons, all of the programs that were authorized in D.C. have not been finally approved by the Public Service Commission. The Reliable Energy Trust Fund is a good start, but it is not yet complete. The RETF should be expanded to all sectors of the economy and all residents. I want to emphasize that the place to operate this program is within the Energy Office. A balanced portfolio of energy efficiency measures would benefit low-income residents of the District as well as other residents and businesses. As we confront increasing environmental requirements and constrained regional electricity supplies, we must recognize that energy efficiency is an inexpensive way to address reductions in overall demand as well as peak load reduction. Expanded use of renewable energy is also critical to diversification of supply and should be strongly supported.

The promotion of Energy Star products has proven to be a great success both here and around the United States. The D.C. campaign of offering rebates on energy efficient air conditioners, refrigerators and washing machines is a good model. The energy office has been a very active Energy Star Partner and an early participant in the Energy Star Challenge, a joint campaign with EPA to have building owners reduce consumption by 10% or more. More should be done in the District. With federal energy efficiency tax credits in place for new and existing homes, a commercial building energy efficiency deduction available and production and investment tax credits available for renewable energy devices, a more extensive promotion program, with additional matching resources, should be instituted in the District.

An additional function of energy offices throughout the United States is to improve the energy efficiency of public buildings. The Green Building Act of 2006 was a significant advance, requiring that all newly constructed nonresidential District-owned buildings be designed to achieve Energy Star status. The Act also requires the monitoring of energy use with benchmarking. New goals should be set for each agency and the Energy Office should be tasked with additional resources and responsibilities to increase program implementation.

The five minute time limit does not permit me to discuss programs in other jurisdictions throughout the country that could be considered as you deliberate on programmatic changes for your energy programs, though I can certainly provide examples for the record.

I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.